

## Amendments to the Claims

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1. (Currently amended) A method of administering identifying characteristics in a computer, comprising the steps of:  
inputting ~~the~~ an identifying characteristic ~~by~~ from a user;  
checking the identifying characteristic ~~by a checking device during input, involving the~~  
~~check of~~ as it is being inputted for conformance with one or more check criteria; and  
transmitting the identifying characteristic to a identifying characteristic processing device  
if the identifying characteristic meets ~~all~~ the check criteria.
  2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
notifying the user during input as to whether the identifying characteristic meets the  
check criteria.
  3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, in which the notification to the user is  
effected by offering the user a facility to ~~terminate input of~~ select the inputted identifying  
characteristic for transmission to the identifying characteristic checking device, in which the  
facility is deactivated if the identifying characteristic fails to meet at least one check criterion, in  
which the facility is activated if the identifying characteristic meets all check criteria, and in  
which the identifying characteristic is only transmitted to the identifying characteristic  
processing device when it is selected for transmission thereto ~~input is terminated~~.
  4. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which, if the identifying characteristic comprises  
several components, the check is performed for each component individually.
  5. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which, during the check, the deviation of the  
identifying characteristic from the check criteria is established, and the input operation is aborted  
if a specific degree of deviation is exceeded.
  6. (Currently amended) A device for administering identifying characteristics in a computer,  
comprising:

means for inputting ~~the~~ an identifying characteristic ~~by~~ from a user;  
a check device for checking the identifying characteristic ~~during input~~ as it is being  
inputted for conformance ~~to~~ with one or more check criteria; and

means for transmitting the identifying characteristic to an identifying characteristic  
processing device if the identifying characteristic meets the check criteria.

7. (Currently amended) The device of claim 6, comprising means for informing the user  
during input as to whether the identifying characteristic meets the check criteria.

8. (Currently amended) The device of claim 6, comprising:  
a facility for ~~terminating input of~~ selecting the inputted identifying characteristic for  
transmission to the identifying characteristic processing device by the user;  
means for deactivating the facility; and  
means for activating the facility.

9. (Original) The device of claim 6, comprising means for checking each component  
individually if the identifying characteristic comprises several components,.

10. (Original) The device of claims 6, comprising:  
means for establishing a deviation of the identifying characteristic from the check  
criteria; and  
means for aborting the input operation if a specific degree of deviation is exceeded.

11. (New) The method of claim 1 in which the transmitting step comprises the steps of:  
enabling a user-actuated selection facility upon inputting of an identifying characteristic  
meeting the check criteria; and  
transmitting the inputted identifying characteristic to the identifying characteristic  
processing device upon actuation of the selection facility by the user.

12. (New) The method of claim 11 in which the identifying characteristic is a password and one of the check criteria is a matching of a first entry of the password with a second entry of the password.

13. (New) The method of claim 1 in which the identifying characteristic is transmitted to the identifying characteristic processing device without user intervention upon inputting of an identifying characteristic meeting the check criteria.

14. (New) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform the method steps of claim 1.

15. (New) The device of claim 6 in which the transmitting means comprises:  
means for enabling a selection facility that may be actuated by the user upon inputting of an identifying characteristic meeting the check criteria; and  
means for transmitting the inputted identifying characteristic to the identifying characteristic processing device upon actuation of the selection facility by the user.

16. (New) The device of claim 6 in which the transmitting means transmits the identifying characteristic to the identifying characteristic processing device without user intervention upon inputting of an identifying characteristic meeting the check criteria.